

NOV 22 1956

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New Mission for Donovan

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# Ex-Head of O.S.S. Again Sent to Trouble Spot

By JAY G. HAYDEN

WASHINGTON — William J. Donovan, who has arrived in Vienna to deal with refugees from Hungary, almost certainly has been vested by President

Eisenhower with a far broader commission.

Beginning with an assignment from Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox as an "observer" of events in Southeastern Europe—December 1940, to March 1941—Donovan evolved into the chief American "cloak and dagger" man of World War II and he has been working ever since in the same line.

From June 1942, until end of the war he was director of the Office of Strategic Services, the first world-wide spy system ever established by the United States government.

One of Donovan's premier operatives in that assignment was Allen W. Dulles, president head of the Central Intelligence Agency,

immeasurably the largest and most expensive "spy" organization ever operated by any nation, possibly excepting Soviet Russia.

Nobody hereabouts knows even remotely the extent or cost of the Soviet's instrument of intelligence and subversion; but all available guesses are that it is preposterously large. Certainly that is the assumption of the United States government which is spending literally billions annually to outdo it.

Another job for Donovan, not so much advertised but highly important, was his ambassadorship to Thailand by appointment of President Eisenhower in 1953-54. That was in the closing days of the Korean War and the rapidly developing war in Indo-China, indicative that Communist China and Russia between them had set out to subvert all of Asia and the Near East.

Thailand was not only near the strategic center of that region but there were signs that it might be next to fall into the Communist basket. Instead Thailand today is a main pillar of democratic strength in southeastern Asia. Its foreign minister, Prince Wan Wai-thayakon, is president of the U.N. General Assembly which today is dealing with the problems both of Suez and Hungary.

Now 73, Mr. Donovan was born in Buffalo, the son of a railroad freight-yard foreman. He worked with his father to meet the family expenses, but still managed to stay in school, working his way to a law degree at Columbia University in 1907.

He was a star quarterback on the Columbia football team. The second string quarterback on the same team was Eddie Collins, later premier second baseman and member of the Cooperstown Baseball Hall of Fame.

Entering World War I as a National Guard member of New York's famous "Fighting 69th," Donovan rose to colonel in command of that regiment.

When the war ended, he was the only man who ever had won all three of the American supreme badges of military heroism, the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Distinguished Service Cross—each of them for bravery in a different action. He was severely wounded three times.

The war over, Donovan turned simultaneously to law and politics. As to law he was highly successful, acquiring a lifetime competence within a half dozen years. In politics he had his ups and

When the 1928 presidential campaign approached he was chief assistant to the U.S. Attorney General and living in the beautiful Georgetown former home of Bushrod Washington, cousin of the first President and himself a member of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1798-1829.

Donovan loaned his residence as a hideout for almost daily luncheons by candidate Herbert Hoover with important visitors.

Donovan expected to be Hoover's Attorney General, and his failure to get that appointment created a mighty rumpus. Hoover's excuse for withholding it was that Donovan had indicated some doubts as to the efficacy of the then-prevailing national prohibition of intoxicating liquor.

But Donovan believed that the real reason he was passed over was his Catholic religion, just then much in the political limelight due to the fact that Hoover's defeated Democratic opponent was the late Gov. Al Smith of New York.

Hoover offered Donovan the governorship of the Philippine Islands and other choice places but

all were refused. Curiously, when Hoover was beaten in 1932, Donovan went down with him as Republican nominee for governor of New York.

And it may be that Hoover's son, Herbert Jr., the present acting Secretary of State, was the one who suggested Donovan as the man of all others best qualified to feel out the meanings of present upheavals in the Communist satellite world.